

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 00348 01 OF 02 091745Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 NIC-01 OMB-01 DODE-00

PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /055 W

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R 091726Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7130

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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AMCONSUL BELFAST

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 00348

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, UK, PINT

SUBJECT: MODERATES TAKE HEART OVER AUEW BALLOT RESULT

BUT NO CLEAR TREND TO RIGHT DISCERNED IN /GENERAL

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: A FIRST-BATTLE VICTORY OF A CONFIRMED
RIGHT-WINGER, JOHN BOYD, IN HIS EFFORT TO BECOME THE
GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE AMALGAMATED UNION OF ENGINEERING
WORKERS, ILLUSTRATES THAT THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT BODY
OF MODERATES WITHIN A UNION FREQUENTLY CHARACTERIZED AS
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PAGE 02 LONDON 00348 01 OF 02 091745Z

A MAJOR LEFT-WING UNION WITHIN THE TUC. BOYD NOW HAS A

VERY GOOD CHANCE TO WIN A RUN-OFF ELECTION IN MARCH AGAINST THE LEFT'S CANDIDATE, BOB WRIGHT. HOWEVER, WHILE MODERATES CAN TAKE HEART OVER THIS AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HUGE ENGINEERING UNION, LEFT-WINGERS CONTINUE TO MAKE INROADS IN OTHER UNIONS. END SUMMARY

2. BOYD RECEIVED 89,514 VOTES, AND HIS NEAREST OPPONENT, BOB WRIGHT, RECEIVED 42,388 VOTES. BOYD AND WRIGHT WERE AMONG ELEVEN CANDIDATES IN THE FIRST-ROUND BALLOT AND THEREFORE THERE WILL BE A RUN'-OFF IN MARCH BETWEEN THE TWO. BOYD, WHO IS ABOUT 56 OR 57 AND A FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE LABOR PARTY, IS A STAUNCH ANTI-COMMUNIST. WRIGHT, NOT A COMMUNIST, WAS SUPPORTED BY THE COMBINED LEFT IN THE AUEW.

3. THE EXTENT OF BOYD'S FIRST-ROUND VICTORY HAS SURPRISED OBSERVERS SINCE HE WAS FACING THE COMBINED LEFT'S POWER IN THE UNION. WHILE BOYD IS NOT WIDELY REGARDED AS A REALLY CHARISMATIC LEADER, HE HAS BEEN THE CENTRAL FIGURE AROUND WHOM THE MODERATES HAVE BEEN FREQUENTLY ABLE TO RALLY. HIS ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN BENEFITED FROM HIS ATTACKS ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNION, WHICH IS REPORTED TO BE HEAVILY IN DEBT. MOREOVER, HE BENEFITED FROM THE EXISTENCE IN THE AUEW OF A POSTAL BALLOT, IN WHICH ABOUT A THIRD OF THE UNION'S MEMBERS VOTED. HAD THE VOTE BEEN AT THE BRANCH LEVEL IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH LOWER, AND THE EXTREME LEFT, WHICH NORMALLY PARTICIPATES HEAVILY, WOULD HAVE BEEN FAR MORE SUCCESSFUL. (IN ADDITION TO BOYD, OTHER MODERATES IN THE AUEW DID WELL, INCLUDING ONE WHO RETAINED HIS SEAT ON THE ENGINEERING SECTION'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE AGAINST A LEFT-WING CHALLENGE, AND SEVERAL WHO WON POSTS AS NATIONAL ORGANIZERS AND DISTRICT SECRETARIES.)

4. WHILE SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT A BOYD VICTORY IN MARCH COULD PAVE THE WAY FOR HIM TO SUCCEED HUGH SCANLON, THE LEFT-WING PRESIDENT OF THE AUEW, OTHERS BELIEVE THAT IF SCANLON STAYS ON UNTIL HE IS DUE TO RETIRE IN TWO OR THREE YEARS, BOYD MAY BE TOO OLD TO CHALLENGE HIM EFFECTIVELY. OTHERS BELIEVE THAT IF THE UNION STAYS IN ONE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 LONDON 00348 01 OF 02 091745Z

PIECE -- IT IS COMPOSED OF FOUR RELATIVELY AUTONOMOUS GROUPS WHICH FREQUENTLY APPEAR TO BE READY TO SPIN OFF FROM EACH OTHER -- THEN KEN GILL, THE COMMUNIST GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE UNION'S WHITE COLLAR SUPERVISORY SECTION AND A MEMBER OF THE TUC GENERAL COUNCIL, MAY MAKE A STRONG CANDIDATE OF THE LEFT. GILL, IN CONTRAST TO BOYD, IS A VERY CHARISMATIC FIGURE AND WOULD MAKE A FORMIDABLE OPPONENT.

5. BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT INSOFAR AS THE AUEW IS CONCERNED, THE LEFT 'IS LICKING ITS WOUNDS,' AS ONE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE DESCRIBED IT. BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT DEMONSTRATES THAT THE RANK AND FILE -- GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY -- WILL 'KICK THE REDS OUT OF THE BED.' IN ADDITION, IF THE MOMENTUM CONTINUES AND -- IF -- BOYD ULTIMATELY WAS ABLE TO TAKE OVER THE AUEW PRESIDENCY, THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THE TUC WOULD SHIFT AS WELL.

6. HOWEVER, IT IS CLEARLY TOO EARLY FOR MODERATES TO SAY 'HURRAH' WITHIN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AS A WHOLE.

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PAGE 01 LONDON 00348 02 OF 02 091750Z

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EACH UNION HAS TO BE LOOKED AT SEPARATELY. THERE IS BY NO MEANS AN OVER-ALL TREND TO THE LEFT DISCERNIBLE IN THESE BRITISH TRADE UNION DEVELOPMENTS. IT IS OF COURSE TRUE THAT A RIGHT-WINGER FRANK CHAPPLE, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING TRADES UNION (EPTU), HAS CONSOLIDATED HIS HOLD ON THE UNION (AS A RESULT OF A UNION VOTE ABOLISHING THE FULL-TIME PRESIDENCY AND SETTING UP A POST OF CHAIRMAN WHO WILL BE ANNUALLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 LONDON 00348 02 OF 02 091750Z

ELECTED FROM WITHIN THE EPTU'S EXECUTIVE). ON THE OTHER HAND, LEFT-WING INFLUENCE, OFTEN TROTSKYITE (INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY) IN ORIGIN, HAS GROWN IN SUCH UNIONS AS THE NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS (NUJ), THE NATIONAL UNION OF SEAMEN (NUS), NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION (NALGO), THE CIVIL AND PUBLIC SERVICES ASSOCIATION (CPSU), AND OTHER UNIONS.

7. IN VIEW OF THE SEVERE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACING THIS COUNTRY AND IN VIEW OF THE COMING BATTLE OF EUROPE. BETWEEN PRO- AND ANTI-EC FORCES WITHIN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, THE YEAR 1975 IS LIKELY TO INVOLVE A DRAMATIC HEIGHTENING OF THE LEFT-RIGHT TENSIONS WITHIN THE DEBRITISH TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. MUCH, OF COURSE, WILL DEPEND ON THE KIND OF MEASURES THE LABOR GOVERNMENT PURSUES THIS YEAR IN DEALING WITH UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION, BUT THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRADE UNION MODERATES -- WHO HAVE LONG REMAINED PASSIVE -- TO STAND UP AND BE COUNTED MAY WELL INCREASE.

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